

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 77

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 154

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 77—Relative to California Early Intervention Services Act.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 3, 2015.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

ACR 77, Mark Stone. California Early Intervention Services Act.

This measure would recognize that every child who needs comprehensive health and early intervention services and supports in order to achieve his or her developmental potential should have those services easily accessible, sufficient, responsive, timely, and of high quality. The measure would further urge the Legislature to leverage existing efforts and statutes to ensure an accountable, results-oriented, and coordinated network of resources in order to provide multidisciplinary early identification and intervention services and supports to California infants and toddlers.

WHEREAS, The period between a child’s birth and third birthday is a time of intense and ongoing development across the cognitive, motor, language, and social-emotional domains; and

WHEREAS, Positive health and learning outcomes depend upon children continually building new skills and abilities along a developmental trajectory of incremental milestones that begins at birth; and

WHEREAS, The Legislature passed Assembly Concurrent Resolution 155 in 2014 in recognition that “[r]esearch over the last two decades in the evolving fields of neuroscience, molecular biology, public health, genomics, and epigenetics reveals that experiences in the first few years of life build changes into the biology of the human body that, in turn, influence the person’s physical and mental health over his or her lifetime”; and

WHEREAS, Adversity during the early years can impair development, and has a cumulative impact, with children exposed to maltreatment and additional risk factors facing increased likelihood of having one or more delays in their cognitive, language, or emotional development; and

WHEREAS, Unaddressed developmental delays and disabilities result in persistently impaired learning and health outcomes for children; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that one in four California children have moderate or higher risk for a developmental delay, such as speech or language impairment, and that nationally one in every 68 children were affected by autism spectrum disorder in 2014; and

WHEREAS, Latino and African American children are more likely to experience barriers in accessing early identification and intervention services; and

WHEREAS, The Legislature has previously established through the California Early Intervention Services Act, in Section 95001 of the Government Code, that “[t]here is a need to provide appropriate early intervention services individually designed for infants and toddlers ... who have disabilities or are at risk of having disabilities, to enhance their development and to minimize the potential for developmental delays”; and

WHEREAS, The California Early Intervention Services Act additionally established that “[e]arly intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities or who are at risk of having disabilities represent an investment of resources, in that these services reduce the ultimate costs to our society, by minimizing the need for special education and related services in later school years and . . . [that] maximize the potential of the individuals to be effective in the context of daily life and activities”; and

WHEREAS, Early intervention services include targeted health and education supports for infants and toddlers who have delays or are at risk of having delays, in order to enhance their development, improve school readiness, and minimize the potential for later challenges; and

WHEREAS, The California Early Intervention Services Act previously established that “the earlier intervention is started, the greater is the ultimate cost-effectiveness and the higher is the educational attainment and quality of life achieved by children with disabilities”; and

WHEREAS, Experts like the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend routine, regular, and formalized developmental and behavioral screening for all infants and toddlers as the most effective way of identifying children in need of supports and services; and

WHEREAS, Fewer than one-third of California infants and toddlers received the recommended developmental and behavioral screenings according to 2011–2012 parent reported data; and

WHEREAS, Forty-one percent of parents report having one or more concerns about their children’s physical, behavioral, or social development; and

WHEREAS, Nearly three out of four California children with special health care needs under three years of age do not receive early intervention services they could benefit from, and the 2012 annual report for California’s Early Start program shows that it serves fewer infants and toddlers with early intervention services than the national average; and

WHEREAS, A system of universal developmental and behavioral screenings should work hand in hand with a robust early intervention system, and should be linked by facilitated family-focused referral, care coordination, child-centered health homes, and information-sharing mechanisms to guide and support families while maintaining accountability; and

WHEREAS, The California Early Intervention Services Act previously established that “the State Department of Developmental Services, the State Department of Education, the State Department of Health Care Services, and the State Department of Social Services coordinate services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families”; and

WHEREAS, The California Early Intervention Services Act additionally established that “families be well informed, supported, and respected as capable and collaborative decisionmakers regarding services for their child”; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That every California child deserves periodic formal assessment of his or her development for the purposes of introducing supports and services if needed; and be it further

Resolved, That every child who needs supports in order to achieve his or her developmental potential deserves that those services be easily accessible, sufficient, responsive, timely, and of high quality; and be it further

Resolved, That every parent or caregiver shall be fully engaged and supported throughout early identification and intervention processes; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature leverage existing efforts and statutes to ensure an accountable, results-oriented, and coordinated statewide network of resources, services, systems, and strong local infrastructures, in order to provide family-centered, comprehensive, and multidisciplinary early identification and intervention services and supports to California infants and toddlers; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature shall support and promote community-driven efforts to coordinate referrals and linkages between, and guide families through the complexities of, the early identification and intervention systems, through programs and models such as Help Me Grow California; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature invest sufficiently in comprehensive health and early intervention services and supports in order to ensure that they meet the health and learning needs of California’s diverse child population, and wisely harness governmental and other resources toward these common goals; and be it further

Resolved, That these services and supports build upon existing efforts, and be embedded and accessible from the places and people that families know and trust, including pediatric practices and other health settings, community-based organizations, regional centers, Early Head Start programs, First 5s, and other local early childhood programs; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.